

NEWSLETTER



US 8 Environmental Impact Statement

August 2004

WisDOT District 8 Newsletter Number 6

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Learn more about the US 8 EIS at:
<http://www.dot.wi.gov/projects/d8/eis/index.htm>

OVERVIEW

This newsletter provides an update on the US 8 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) alternatives, schedule and upcoming activities. A summary of these activities is provided below with more detail in this issue.

This spring, the study team was requested to provide additional analysis of alternatives to factor in noise and air quality impacts for each of the study alternatives. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has decided to conduct a conceptual stage relocation plan (CSRP) for each alternative. A CSRP is a detailed assessment of all potential residential and business relocations. The archaeological investigation of the Deer Lake Far Southern alternative, introduced in the last newsletter, is also underway.

In addition, the study team was recently asked to make changes to some of the alternatives. The changes include adding another realignment in one segment, moving the location of the corridor for a different alternative, and consideration of interchanges instead of at-grade intersections for bypass alternatives.

The study team will complete the engineering and analysis needed to respond to these requests over the course of this summer and fall. We anticipate these efforts will delay the release of the Draft EIS until spring 2005. Once the DEIS has been made available to the public for review, a public hearing will be scheduled.

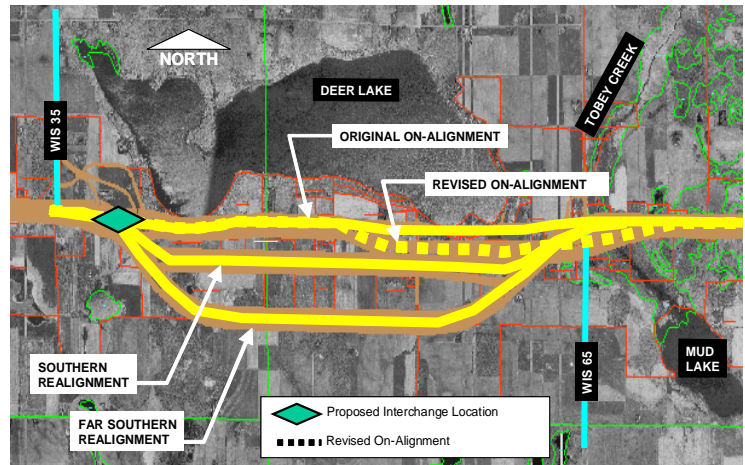


This view is looking west from Barron. In this section of US 8, Barron Alternative A constructs a median and two new eastbound lanes on the south side of existing US 8. City officials have asked that the corridor be moved farther south to avoid relocation of homes west of County T.

CHANGES TO ALIGNMENTS

■ Deer Lake On-alignment (Segment I)

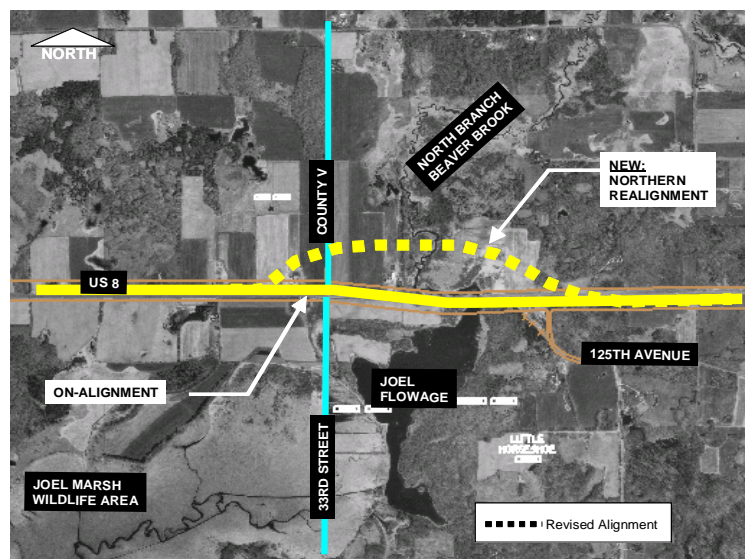
The Deer Lake On-alignment Alternative has been modified slightly. The original proposal locates the new four-lane roadway just south of existing US 8 with existing US 8 serving as a frontage road for access to Deer Lake. The one modification to this alternative occurs between 170th Street and WIS 65 to avoid a trailer home park. Just west of 170th Street, the alternative alignment shifts about 600 to 700 feet south of existing US 8. The alignment rejoins the existing roadway about a half mile east of WIS 65. With this modified alternative, existing US 8 will still be used as a frontage road to access Deer Lake. The figure shows the modification of the Deer Lake On-alignment Alternative.



Deer Lake alternatives with revised Deer Lake On-alignment Alternative.

■ Joel Flowage Northern Realignment (Segment IV)

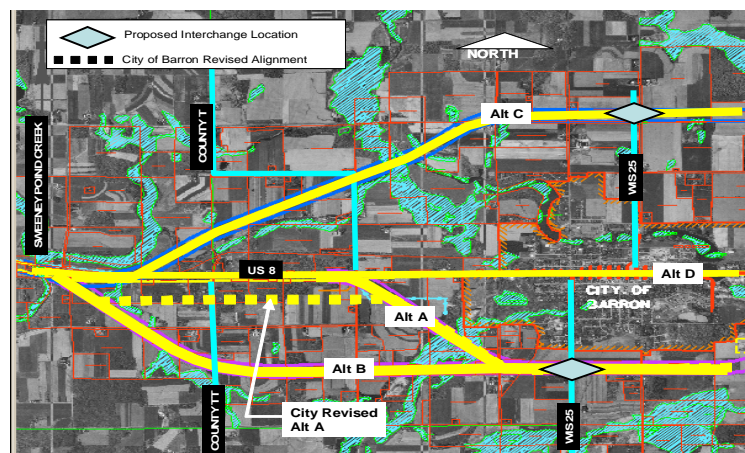
The Joel Flowage Northern Realignment is a new alternative. It was developed in response to potential impacts to the Beaver Brook channel that runs parallel to US 8 and to the Joel Marsh Wildlife Area south of existing US 8, owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The Joel Flowage Northern Realignment follows the same alignment as the Joel Flowage On-alignment Alternative until just west of 33rd Street (County V). At this point, the alignment shifts to the north about 1000 feet. The off-alignment segment rejoins the on-alignment segment east of 125th Street as shown on the aerial map.



Joel Flowage On-alignment Alternative with new Northern Realignment.

■ Barron Alternative A, Short South Bypass (Segment VII)

In April, the city of Barron provided the study team with notice of their support of Barron Alternative A (Short South Bypass). However, they requested a change to the corridor location west of County T. The original proposal called for adding two lanes and a median south of existing US 8 for the segment west of County T, thereby requiring a number of homeowners to be relocated. In response to the city's request, WisDOT has asked the study team to look at alternatives that save the homes by moving the corridor south of and roughly parallel to existing US 8, as shown in the figure.



Barron bypass alternatives with city of Barron revised Alternative A.

CHANGES TO BYPASS ALTERNATIVES

The proposed Turtle Lake and Barron bypass alternatives have one interchange in the middle and at-grade intersections where the bypass connects with existing US 8. At this time, the WisDOT is considering two interchanges, instead of one, for each of the proposed bypass alternatives.

Engineering of these changes may be underway this fall. When the locations are finalized, maps showing the revised alternatives will be prepared and placed on the project Web site. The revisions will also be described in the Draft EIS and presented at the public hearing.

■ Turtle Lake (Segment V)

The original Turtle Lake bypass alternatives have one proposed interchange with US 63 (north or south depending on the bypass alternative). At the locations where a bypass alternative departs from (or rejoins) the existing roadway, interchanges are being considered to connect the bypass with existing US 8.

■ Barron (Segment VII)

Similar to Turtle Lake, the DOT is considering interchanges wherever a bypass departs from (or rejoins) existing US 8 for the Barron bypass alternatives. If the interchanges to the east and west are added, the currently proposed interchange with WIS 25 may be removed. WIS 25 would have a bridge over US 8 with no access to the bypass.

AIR QUALITY EVALUATION

Also during the summer, the study team will be conducting an air quality evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that the air quality levels do not exceed set standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This will be ensured by either meeting exemptions in the state codes or modeling a worst-case scenario for air emissions to verify the EPA standards are not exceeded.

US 8 EIS SCHEDULE UPDATE

The US 8 EIS schedule has been revised to include activities being completed this summer and fall. After the alternative refinements, noise and air analysis, additional archaeological investigations, and conceptual stage relocation plans are completed, the draft EIS will be reviewed by agencies and a DEIS will be available for public comment in spring 2005. The study team will hold a public hearing in the summer of 2005 and a Final EIS is anticipated in late fall 2005.

NOISE ANALYSIS

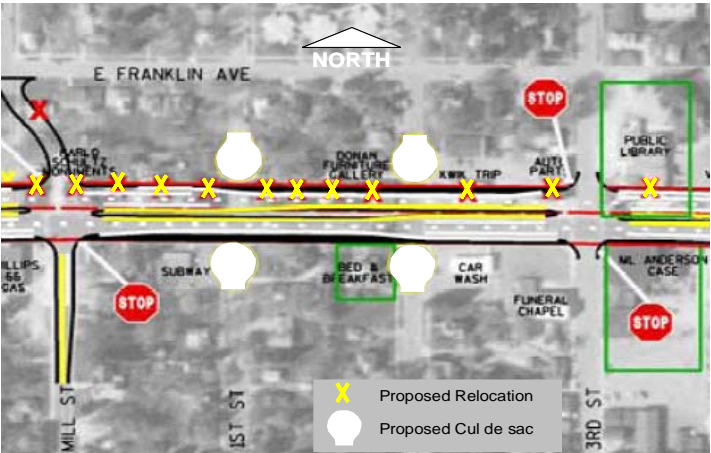
The study team is also conducting a noise analysis and will take noise readings at various locations along the corridor to establish existing noise levels. Then, based on the various alternatives, the study team will develop a noise model to estimate the increase or decrease of noise levels at those locations. The analysis will also determine whether the proposed alternatives will cause noise levels to exceed the maximum threshold and qualify for any noise abatement measures, as determined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Sound Source	Sound Levels	Subjective
Military Jet takeoff	140	Threshold of pain
Rock and roll band	120	Uncomfortably loud
Power lawn mower at operator	100	Very loud
Vacuum cleaner	70	Moderately loud
Normal conversation	60	Quiet
Lower limit urban ambient sound	40	Very quiet

Examples of comparative noise levels.

CONCEPTUAL STATE RELOCATION PLAN

The alternatives under study impact residences, businesses, and farms. A Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP) is a detailed assessment of the properties where owners would need to be relocated. WisDOT real estate staff is currently reviewing the size and age of each structure and will examine the existing real estate market to determine if there are comparable residential and/or commercial properties to compensate those that would be relocated. The CSRP will provide an estimate of the total real estate cost for each alternative. This information will be in the DEIS.



Possible relocations through the city of Barron.



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